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DIGITAL EDITION
HABERLIN
HOLGUIN
VANDYKE
32 PAGE FINALE!
MEDIEVAL
SPAWN
AND
WITCHBLADE

image PRESENTS...

MEDIEVAL SPAWN AND WITCHBLADE

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NEW YORK.
WELCOME
HAVEN PARK
KILDARE, WHERE THE HELL IS HE?
ADAM, YOU SHOULDN'T DEPEND ON A MECHANICAL WATCH TO MEASURE THE PASSAGE OF TIME.
TIME IS RELATIVE.
HE'S STILL LATE.
I'VE WAITED CENTURIES FOR THIS MOMENT.
CAN'T YOU BE PATIENT FOR A FEW MINUTES?
AS LONG AS HE COMES. I'M STARTING TO HAVE MY DOUBTS.
THE VISIONS I'M GETTING FROM THE ARTIFACTS ARE AMBIVALENT AND THERE ARE SO MANY VERSIONS OF THE STORY.
VISION
IF TIME IS RELATIVE, SO IS HISTORY.

SMITHSONIAN ACCEPTS BEQUEST OF RARE MANUSCRIPT

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This etching is thought to depict the epic battle between the Hellspawn and a manifestation of a demon with shape-shifting powers.

is thought that Sir Christopher made the beque
ition of the long relationship he had w
al Museum of African Art.
rivaled his expe

HOW DO WE KNOW WHICH IS *LEGEND* AND WHICH IS THE *TRUTH?*

THE PAST.
LET'S SEE WHAT'S UNDER THAT ARMOR.

FWOMP
EASE UP, OWAIN.
SHE'S NOT OUR ENEMY.
IF YOU SAY SO, MY LORD, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LET HER KILL YOU.

DAMNED BIRD!

WHAT IN ETERNAL DAMNATION IS HAPPENING HERE?

THIS STUPID BIRD IS TRYING TO PECK MY EYES OUT.
YOU MAY FIND THAT YOU SEE BETTER WITHOUT YOUR EYES.
CAN'T YOU TELL THE GIRL'S REASON HAS BEEN CLOUDED BY THE ENCHANTMENT IN THIS PLACE?

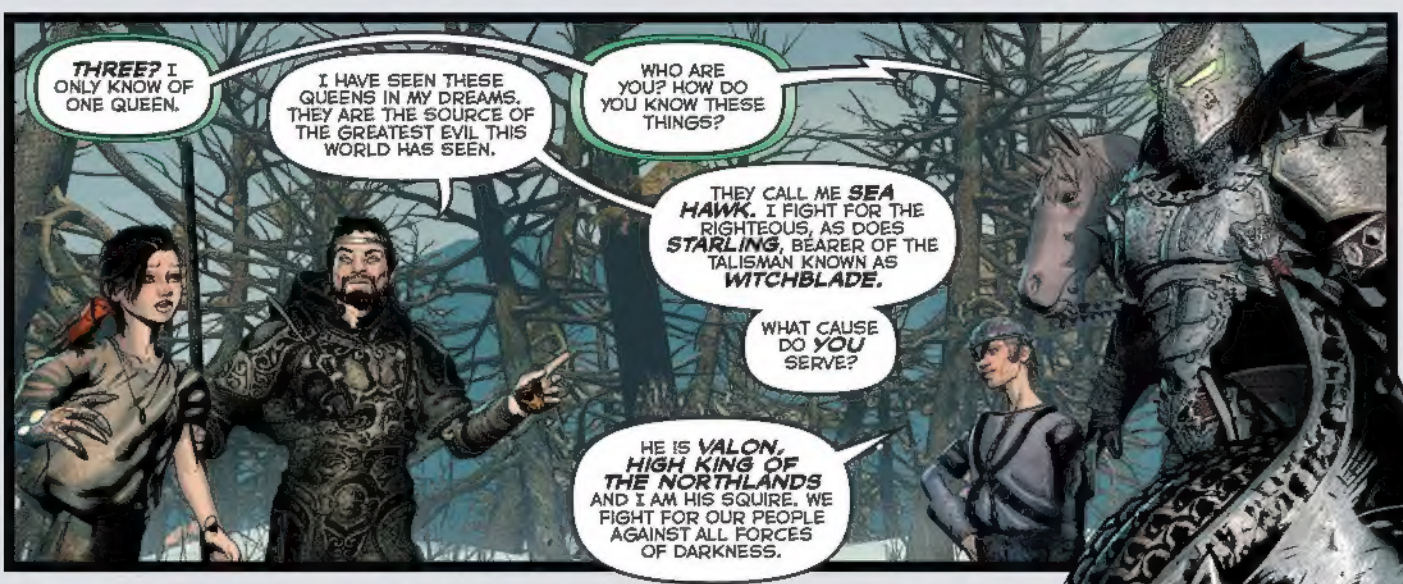
SEA HAWK? YOU'RE SAFE?

AYE, I'M WELL. BUT YOU INHALED TOXIC SPORES WHEN YOU WERE IN THE PASSAGE.
I FEAR THEY HAVE POISONED YOUR MIND.

I MUST PERFORM A CLEANSING RITUAL.
I DON'T TRUST HIM.
IF HE HARMS HER, HE DIES.
SQUAAWWWKK
CLEARLY NONE OF YOU HAVE FAITH IN ME.
BE SILENT.
RELAX NOW, STARLING. YOU MUST BE PURGED.
LOOK INSIDE YOURSELF.
RECOGNIZE WHAT IS ALIEN TO YOU AND EXPEL IT.
THAT'S IT. LET IT OUT!

I'M SORRY I ATTACKED YOU.
AND I'M SORRY I HIT YOU, THOUGH I WOULD GLADLY DO IT AGAIN IF YOU—
THAT'S ENOUGH, OWAIN.
I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT MADE THIS GIRL SEE ME AS HER ENEMY.

I HAD A VISION, IT SEEMED SO REAL. MY MOTHER WAS HERE, ALIVE!
SHE TOLD ME NOT TO TRUST YOU. SHE SAID I SHOULD GIVE MY ALLEGIANCE TO THREE WOMEN...
...THREE QUEENS.


THREE? I ONLY KNOW OF ONE QUEEN.
I HAVE SEEN THESE QUEENS IN MY DREAMS. THEY ARE THE SOURCE OF THE GREATEST EVIL THIS WORLD HAS SEEN.
WHO ARE YOU? HOW DO YOU KNOW THESE THINGS?
THEY CALL ME SEA HAWK. I FIGHT FOR THE RIGHTEOUS, AS DOES STARLING, BEARER OF THE TALISMAN KNOWN AS WITCHBLADE.
WHAT CAUSE DO YOU SERVE?
HE IS VALON, HIGH KING OF THE NORTHLANDS AND I AM HIS SQUIRE. WE FIGHT FOR OUR PEOPLE AGAINST ALL FORCES OF DARKNESS.

YOU DO NOT ANSWER FOR YOURSELF. I SENSE YOUR MIND ALSO, IS CLOUDED AND UNCERTAIN.

WILL YOU JOIN US, KING VALON?
WE JOURNEY SOUTH TO THE CASTLE WHERE THE QUEENS OF EVIL HOLD COURT.
SOUTH? YOU ARE MISTAKEN. THE CASTLE LIES TO THE NORTH.

SOMETHING IS AMISS. MY SENSES ARE IN DISARRAY.
CASTLE VALON LIES NEITHER TO THE NORTH NOR THE SOUTH...

IT IS HERE!

And thus their true enemy was revealed to them - THE TRINITY OF EVIL...
...Mother...
...Daughter...
...Unholy Spirit...
THAT'S THEM!
THEY'RE THE QUEENS WHO SPOKE TO ME!

RIELLE, THE YEARS HAVE BEEN KIND TO YOU.
YOU ARE AS BEAUTIFUL AS EVER.
BUT WHO ARE YOU?
YOU WEAR THE ARMOR OF KING VALON, YOU CARRY HIS SWORD, PEACE-MAKER.
THIS IS INDEED KING VALON, AS YOU WILL LEARN TO YOUR ETERNAL SORROW.
OH NO. YOU ARE MISTAKEN.
THIS IS KING VALON.
HUUURGH
WE FORGED THE CHARM HE WEARS AROUND HIS NECK.
OUR WEDDING GIFT TO BIND HIM TO US.
EVEN IN DEATH, HE COULD NOT IGNORE ITS POWER. IT COMPELLED HIS CORPSE TO RISE FROM THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

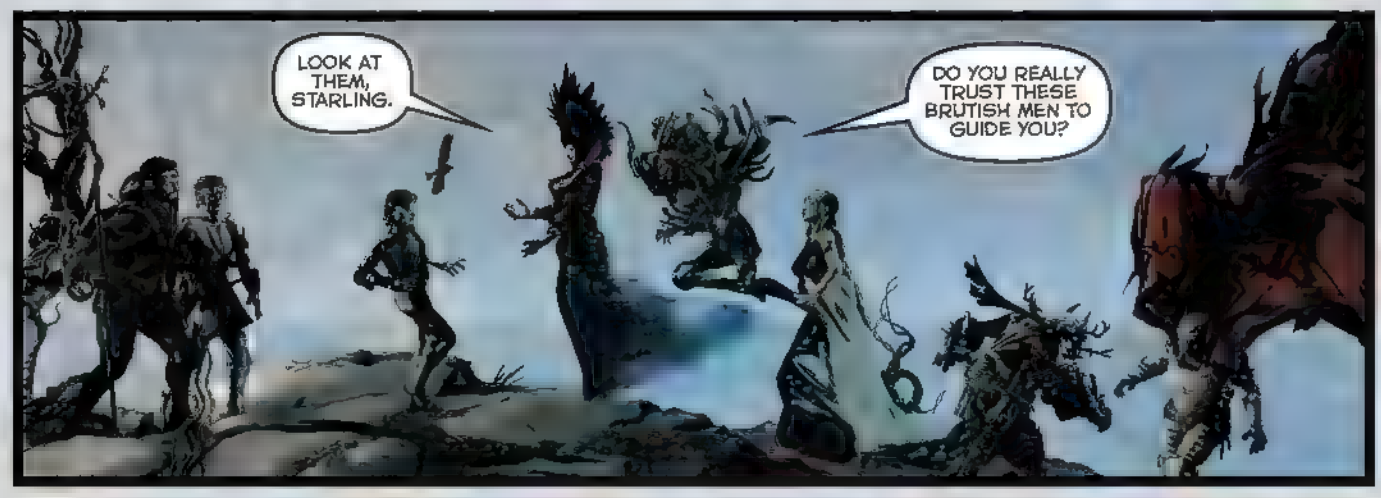
ON ROTTING LIMBS HE CRAWLED HIS WAY BACK TO HIS QUEEN.
THE TERRIBLE JOURNEY LASTED SEVEN LONG WEEKS.
BUT RETURN HE DID.
IF THIS IS TRUE, THEN TELL ME...
...WHO AM I?
I KNOW YOU. YOU ARE MY BETRAYER, MY ERSTWHILE FRIEND.
YOU ARE LEITH.

CAN IT BE TRUE?
OH GODS... I REMEMBER NOW... THE VEIL IS LIFTING FROM MY MEMORY.
RIELLE ENCHANTED ME. WE MADE LOVE BENEATH THE STARS, IN THE PLACE OF THE STANDING STONES.
IF YOU ARE LEITH, THEN SHOW US YOUR FACE.
AH, POOR LEITH. IT *IS* YOU.
THE TWO MOST HANDSOME MEN IN THE LAND NOW RIVAL ONE ANOTHER IN REPULSIVENESS.
MY KING, MY FRIEND, CAN YOU FORGIVE ME?
FOR BEDDING MY WIFE? PERHAPS.
BUT FOR KILLING ME?
NEVER!

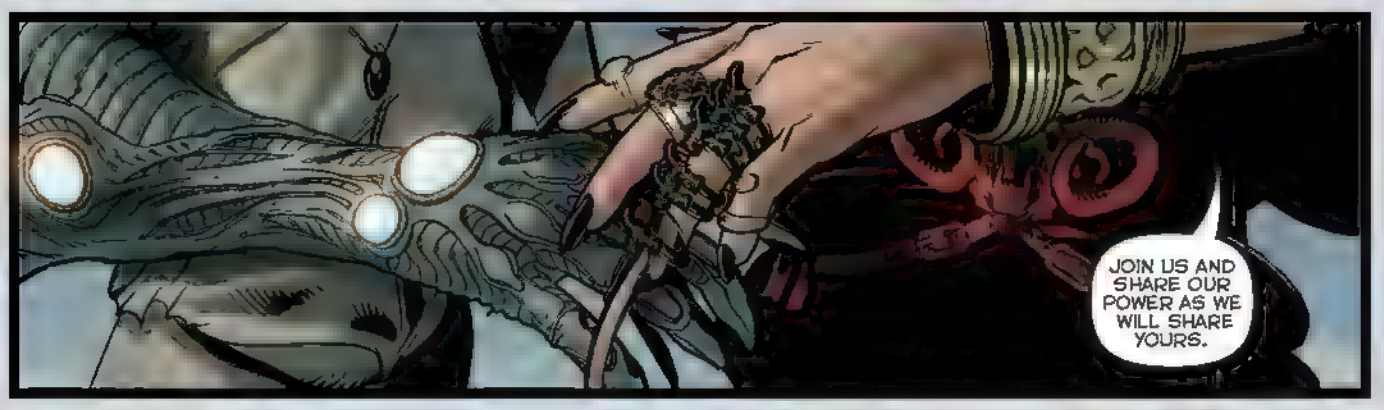
YOUR LUST FOR RIELLE KNEW NO BOUNDS. AS THE BATTLE RAGED, IT WAS YOU WHO SLEW ME WITH A COWARDLY SWORDSTROKE.
"YOU TOOK MY SWORD FROM MY DEAD HAND."
"THEN YOU RETURNED TO USURP MY KINGDOM AND MY WIFE..."
I REMEMBER.
ALL THIS IS TRUE. BUT ONCE I RETURNED, I CLAIMED NEITHER PRIZE.
I SAW RIELLE FOR WHAT SHE WAS, NOT ONE, BUT THREE, AND NONE OF HER ASPECTS WAS TRULY HUMAN...

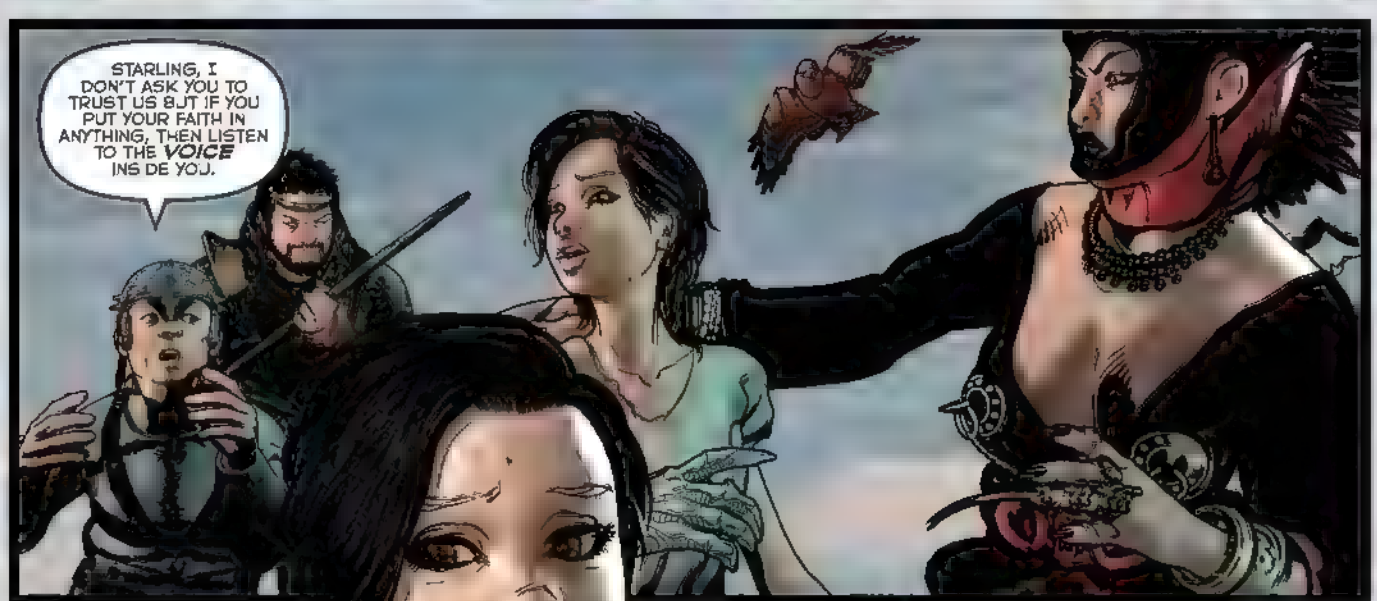
"THE GUILT WAS TOO MUCH. I HAD BETRAYED MY FRIEND AND MY PEOPLE."
"I COULD NOT BEAR TO LIVE."
"I FELL, YET THE BLESSED RELIEF OF DEATH WAS DENIED ME. THE EARTH OPENED BENEATH ME."
"I FOUND MYSELF IN THE REALM OF A DEMON NAMED MALEBOLGIA, WHO OFFERED ME A PACT...TO GO BACK TO EARTH TO MAKE AMENDS FOR ALL MY SINS..."
"...AND WHEN MY ATONEMENT WAS DONE, TO RETURN TO SERVE HIM FOR ALL ETERNITY..."
"...AS HIS HELLSPAWN!"

I WILL NOT FIGHT YOU MY OLD FRIEND.
TAKE BACK YOUR SWORD.
WAIT!
THAT THING IS NO LONGER KING VALON.
HE CEASED TO BE VALON AT THE MOMENT OF HIS DEATH. NOW HE IS NO MORE THAN THEIR BONDS HAVE WITH NO WILL OF HIS OWN.
HUUAAARRRH
I AM PART OF A SOCIETY THAT HAS FOUGHT THROUGH THE AGES AGAINST THE EVIL REPRESENTED BY THIS TRINITY.
THEY WANT MORE THAN TO RULE THIS EARTH.
THEY MEAN TO CONSUME IT.


LOOK AT THEM, STARLING.
DO YOU REALLY TRUST THESE BRUTISH MEN TO GUIDE YOU?

A MONSTER WHO MURDERED HIS BEST FRIEND AND ADMITS TO SERVING A DEMON FROM HELL...
...AND A TRICKSTER WHO WEAVES ILLUSIONS TO CONFUSE YOU.


JOIN US AND SHARE OUR POWER AS WE WILL SHARE YOURS.


STARLING, I DON'T ASK YOU TO TRUST US BUT IF YOU PUT YOUR FAITH IN ANYTHING, THEN LISTEN TO THE VOICE INSIDE YOU.

PERHAPS IT WAS A LUCKY GUESS, OR MAYBE OWAIN WAS WISER THAN HE WAS GIVEN CREDIT FOR
STARLING DID HEAR A VOICE, NO LONGER CLOUDED OR UNCERTAIN, BUT RINGING WITH CRYSTAL CLARITY.

THE VOICE OF THE WITCHBLADE!
THE VOICE WAS THREEFOLD. ONE EACH FOR THE FORCES OF ORDER, CHAOS AND THE MIDDLE WAY.
TOGETHER THEY SANG THE VOICE OF GAIA - THE SOUL OF THE WORLD.
GAIA, WHO HAS THE POWER TO DISPEL ALL ILLUSION AND REVEAL
...THE TRUTH!
JOIN US, SCOURGE. BECOME ONE WITH YOUR MISTRESS.
HUUUkRGH
DON'T LISTEN TO THEM.
THEIR PROMISES WILL ONLY BRING YOU MORE PAIN.

IT WAS FAR TOO LATE TO REASON WITH THE CREATURE WHO WAS ONCE KING VALON.
NOW, HE WAS SCOURGE AND PAIN WAS ALL HE KNEW.

TO BE ONE WITH HIS MISTRESS WAS THE GREATEST JOY HE COULD IMAGINE

squaw-awk
Yech!
I AM REALLY GLAD I DIDN'T TAKE THEIR OFFER BECAUSE THAT IS DISGUSTING!
AND REALLY, REALLY...

...BIG

THEN THE VERY FABRIC OF TIME AND SPACE FRACTURED AND THE HEROES WERE GIVEN A FORETASTE OF THE NIGHTMARE WORLD THAT WOULD CONSUME THEIRS IF THEY FAILED TO STOP IT.
A BREECH OPENED AND THROUGH IT SPILLED MONSTERS WITH AN INSATIABLE HUNGER FOR DESTRUCTION.

THIS IS HOPELESS. WE CAN'T FIGHT THIS.
WHILE WE LIVE, THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE.

STARLING, KEEP THESE THINGS BACK WHILE I DEAL WITH THE TRINITY.
YOU CANNOT WIN THIS BATTLE. OUR FOLLOWERS ARE LEGION. SLAY ONE AND A DOZEN WILL TAKE ITS PLACE.
LISTEN, HELLSPAWN, LEITH, WHATEVER YOU CALL YOURSELF. I'M CHANGING OUR STRATEGY.
YOU DEAL WITH THE MUCK MONSTERS. I'LL TAKE THE TRINITY.
ONLY DAYS AGO, STARLING WAS NOTHING BUT AN ORPHANED WAIF - A BEGGAR AND A THIEF. NOW THE FATE OF THE WORLD RESTS IN HER HANDS.
YOU WANTED THE POWER OF THE WITCHBLADE...

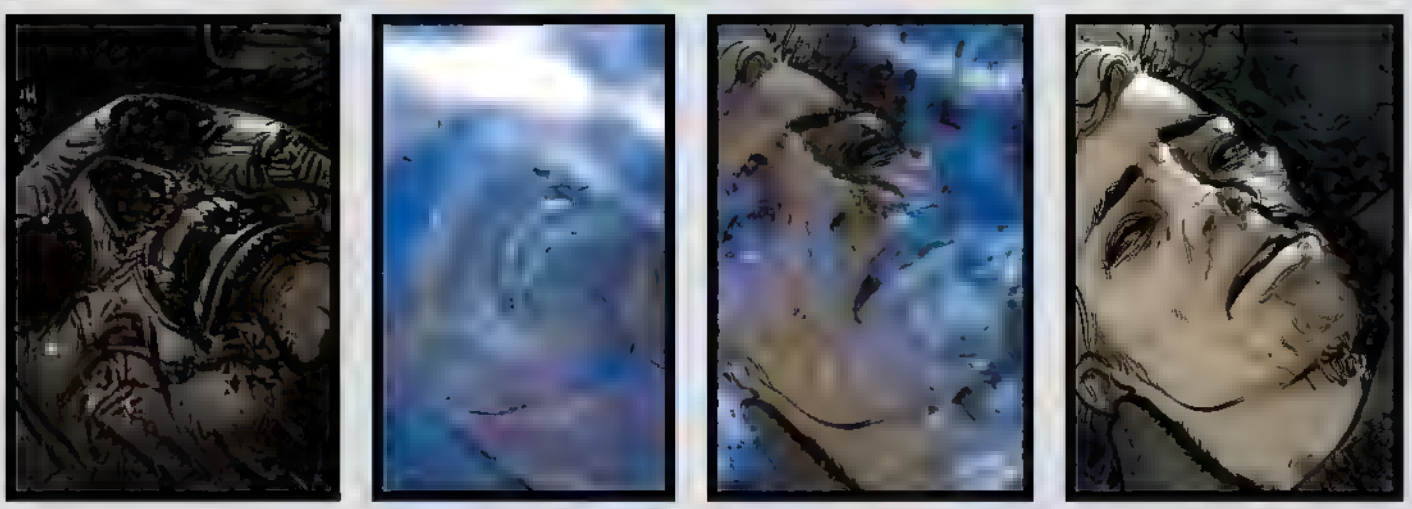
THEN TAKE IT!
HMMM... IMPRESSIVE.
GIVE US MORE!

SHE'S GOING TO DIE. HELP HER, MY KING.
HOW MANY TIMES MUST I TELL YOU, I'M NOT A KING.
THIS IS BEYOND MY PROWESS.
THE DEMON WHO REMADE YOU. HE SENT YOU BACK TO MAKE AMENDS. PLEASE, MY LORD, PLEASE TRY...
MALEBOLGIA... YES...HE DID REMAKE ME...
IF I COULD UNLEASH EVERY ATOM OF THE NECROPLASM THAT SHAPES ME...
...IF I COULD TEAR THIS HELLSPAWNED BODY APART...

NO EARTHLY POWER COULD EVER STAND AGAINST THE TRINITY.
ONLY A FORCE STEEPED IN DARKNESS, TAINTED WITH THE MALEVOLENCE OF HELL ITSELF COULD HAVE PREVAILED.

A FORCE OF EVIL GUIDED BY THE WILL OF A GOOD MAN.
IT IS FINISHED.

YOU DID IT!
THE TRINITY IS GONE!
YES... FOR NOW...
AND WITH THE DEPARTURE OF THE TRINITY, KING VALON TOO FINALLY FINDS PEACE, AS HIS SPIRIT LEAVES THE BODY THAT HAS BEEN HIS PRISON FOR SO LONG.



MY LORD...
I AM STILL YOUR SQUIRE AND YOU ARE STILL MY LORD.
YOU MUST NOT DIE.
MY MASTER CALLS ME...
HE WAS A NOBLE WARRIOR BUT HIS WOUNDS ARE TOO GRAVE TO SURVIVE.
WE HAVE TO SAVE HIM.
THIS WAS HIS FATE, TO FIND REDEMPTION.
NOW HE MUST RETURN TO SERVE HIS MASTER, MALEBOLGIA.
YES... THAT'S IT...
THE FUTURE...

THE WITCHBLADE IS TELLING ME... IN THE FUTURE THERE IS NO MALEBOLGIA.
IF WE CAN SEND HIM THERE, THE DEMON WILL NO LONGER EXIST TO SUMMON HIM.
THERE MAY BE A WAY, AN ANCIENT INCANTATION, BUT IT IS DANGEROUS.
TIME SHOULD NOT BE TAMPERED WITH.
HE WAS WILLING TO GIVE HIS LIFE FOR US.
WE OWE IT TO HIM TO TRY.
THEN GIVE ME YOUR HAND.
LEND ME THE POWER OF THE WITCHBLADE.
LIGHT OVER LIGHT, DARK OVER DARK MAKE THE DAYS AND PASSING YEARS BE IN OUR THRALL - SO LET IT BE!
OPEN WIDE THE DOOR OF TIME GIVE PASSAGE TO THE ONE WE CHOOSE IAQ SABAO! SUCH ARE THE WORDS!

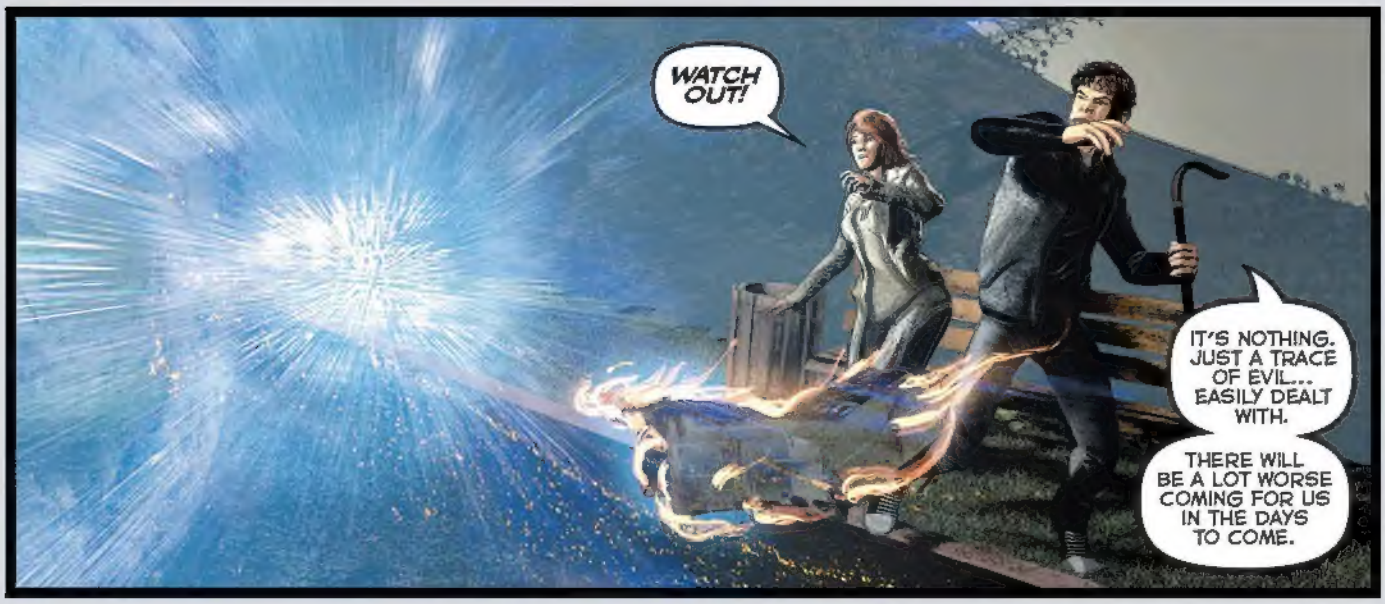
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
THE PORTAL IS OPENING.
STAND CLEAR UNLESS YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS.
IN THE DEPTHS OF HELL THE DEMON MALEBOLGIA VENTS HIS ANGER AND FRUSTRATION AS THE HELLSPAWN SLIPS FROM HIS GRASP....
NOOOOOOOOO
...AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS EXISTENCE, AS HE CATCHES A GLIMPSE OF HIS OWN FATE, HE KNOWS THE BITTER TASTE OF FEAR...

DO YOU THINK HE'S SAFE?
YES.
AND WHAT GIVES YOU SUCH GREAT INSIGHT, YOUNG MAN?
I BELIEVE IN JUSTICE.
LEITH PAID FOR HIS SINS. IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING, HE WAS A DECENT PERSON.
I'M SURE YOU'RE RIGHT. I FEEL IT TOO.
YOU FOUGHT WELL TODAY, STARLING.
I WASN'T WRONG ABOUT YOU. YOU ARE THE RIGHTFUL BEARER OF THE WITCHBLADE.
YES. I AM.
SO WILL YOU JOIN US?
WILL YOU BE ONE OF THE TRUSTED?

IF YOU REALLY NEED ME SOME DAY–IF THERE'S A GREAT DANGER, LIKE THE TRINITY–THEN I'LL HELP YOU.
BUT I'M NOT GOING TO JOIN YOUR BAND OF ROVING WARRIORS.
MY PEOPLE NEED ME. MY FAMILY.
THINK CAREFULLY, GIRL. THE TRUSTED ARE A NOBLE BREED OF WARRIORS.
MY TRIBE IS A NOBLE ONE, TOO.
I'M GOING TO HELP THEM REPAIR THE DAMAGE DONE BY THE TRINITY, AND BY THE GENERATIONS OF MEN WHO OPPRESSED MY ANCESTORS...
...THE LINE OF WITCH WOMEN I'M DESCENDED FROM.
A PITY. BUT I RESPECT YOUR CHOICE.
YOU ARE WISE BEYOND YOUR YEARS.
WHAT-?

YEARS LATER...
AND SO THE WYTCHE CHYLDE, STARLING, WENT BACK TO HER PEOPLE, AND THE HAWK RETURNED TO THE SEA.
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HELLSPAWN?
TELL US ANOTHER STORY, OWAIN!
THERE ARE MANY MORE TALES TO TELL BUT THEY WILL KEEP FOR ANOTHER DAY.
LEAVE ME TO MY WORK NOW.
IT'S ALL VERY WELL TO TELL STORIES TO CHILDREN, BUT THE LORE KEEPER MUST ALSO MAKE A MORE PERMANENT RECORD.
ONE THAT WILL ENDURE THROUGH THE AGES, SO THAT ALL THE GENERATIONS OF MAN SHALL KNOW THE HISTORY OF STARLING, THE YOUNG GIRL WHO FOUND WISDOM, OF THE SEA HAWK WHO STOOD AGAINST THE POWERS OF DARKNESS...
AND OF THE HELLSPAWN, WHO, WITH THE HELP OF TRUE FRIENDS, ESCAPED HIS DESTINY.

AT LAST!
THAT'S HIM.
HMMPH. I HOPE HE'S WORTH THE WAIT.
ADAM! WHAT'S THAT?
IT APPEARS THAT OUR HELLSPAWN HAS BROUGHT AN ELEMENT OF THE DARK FORCES WITH HIM.
BEGONE!


WATCH OUT!
IT'S NOTHING. JUST A TRACE OF EVIL... EASILY DEALT WITH.
THERE WILL BE A LOT WORSE COMING FOR US IN THE DAYS TO COME.

I'M PLEASED TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE AGAIN, SIR KNIGHT.
IT'S MANY YEARS SINCE WE LAST MET AT THE CIRCLE OF ENCHANTMENT.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
THAT, MY FRIEND, IS A LONG STORY.
WE'LL TELL YOU ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW, BUT FIRST, LET'S GET YOU HOME.
AHHHH!
SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH MY FACE! MY FLESH FEELS LIKE IT'S MELTING.

YOU'RE SHOCKED. I KNOW MY FEATURES ARE HIDEOUS.
THE DEMON MALEBOLGIA LIKES HIS SERVANTS TO BE AS REPULSIVE AS HIMSELF.
NO, NOT REPULSIVE AT ALL. YOU ARE BORN AGAIN. MALEBOLGIA IS GONE. YOU HAVE NO MASTER...
...WHETHER FOR GOOD OR EVIL, FROM THIS MOMENT, YOU WILL BE WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE.
The End

SON OF ULTRON